

261 CMR 5.00: CONTINUING EDUCATION

Section

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5.01: Preface

The goal of continuing education is to improve the delivery of health care to the public by ensuring appropriate on-going activities/programs to enhance the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes of respiratory therapists, so that they may continue to practice competently, safely, and effectively. Respiratory therapists are required to comply with these continuing education regulations. The Board provides these criteria to assist respiratory therapists in maintaining the high standards of the profession by selecting quality educational programs to fulfill the goal of continuing education.

5.02: Continuing Education Requirement

A total of 15 contact hours of continuing education, not more than six of which shall be in correspondence courses and not more than four of which shall be in a recredentialing examination, within the continuing education period, are required for license renewal. Licensees must achieve or exceed the recredentialing examination passing score established by the NBRC in order for those hours to qualify for satisfaction of the continuing education requirement. The CRTT recredentialing examination shall not qualify for satisfaction of the continuing education requirement for licensees who are RRTs. Continuing education shall not be required of a new licensee for the first renewal of a license.

5.03: Definitions

AARC. American Association for Respiratory Care.

Activity. A single learning event or segment of at least one contact hour of a program directed toward attainment of specific objectives.

Clinical experience. Supervised clinical practice with an organized plan of study.

Conditions for renewal. A respiratory therapist who has attested under pain and penalty of perjury to completion of the required contact hours of continuing education during the current licensure period.

Contact hour. The unit of measurement of organized learning lasting 50 consecutive minutes in non-clinical experience offerings and 100 consecutive minutes for clinical experience.

Continuing education period. The period from January 1 of each even numbered year to January 1 of the next even numbered year.

Continuing education in respiratory care. Planned, organized learning activities/programs designed to augment the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the enhancement of the practice of respiratory care to the end of improving health care to the public.

CRCE. Continuing Respiratory Care Education system of the AARC.

Evaluation. The process of determining whether objectives have been met.

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MSRC. Massachusetts Society for Respiratory Care.

New licensee. A respiratory therapist who has been granted an initial license in respiratory care in the current licensure period.

Objective. A statement that delineates a desired, specific attainable and measurable change in learner behavior.

Orientation. The means by which respiratory therapists are introduced to the philosophy, goals, policies, basic procedures, role and expectations, physical facilities and special services in a specific work setting. Orientation is not considered continuing education for the purpose of 261 CMR 5.00.

Program. Multiple activities or segments based on an organized effort directed toward accomplishing major objectives. A program includes several segments which are described as activities or courses.

Provider. Individuals, organizations, institutions of higher education, health care facilities, etc., offering continuing education activities/programs.

Type. The kind, sort, nature, description, and character of continuing education for respiratory therapists, which include academic courses, correspondence courses, recredentialing examinations, planned and supervised clinical experience, and seminars/workshops.

5.04: Criteria for Qualification of Continuing Education Activities/Programs

The following criteria are given to guide respiratory therapists in selecting an appropriate activity/program and to guide the provider in planning and implementing continuing education activities/programs. The overriding consideration in determining whether a specific activity/program qualifies as acceptable continuing education is that it be a planned program of learning which contributes directly to the professional competence of the respiratory therapist.

(1) Amount.

- (a) 50 consecutive clock minutes of academic course work, correspondence course, or seminar/workshop is equivalent to one contact hour. A fraction of a contact hour may be computed by dividing the clock minutes of the activity by 50 expressed as a decimal.
- (b) Recredentialing examinations shall be equivalent to the following number of contact hours: CRTT = three contact hours, Written registry = two contact hours, Clinical Simulation = four contact hours, and Perinatal/Pediatric Speciality = two contact hours.
- (c) One continuing education unit (C.E.U.) is equal to ten contact hours.
- (d) One semester hour is equal to 15 contact hours.
- (e) One quarter hour is equal to 12 contact hours.
- (f) Two hours (100 minutes) of clinical experience is equal to one contact hour.

(2) Learner Objectives.

- (a) Objectives shall be written and be the basis for determining content, learning experience, teaching methodologies, and evaluation.
- (b) Objectives shall be specific, attainable, measurable, and describe expected outcomes for the learner.

(3) Subject Matter.

- (a) Appropriate subject matter for continuing education shall include the following:
  - Respiratory care science and practice
  - Respiratory care education
  - research in Respiratory care and health care
  - management, administration and supervision in health care delivery
  - social, economic, political, legal aspects of health care
  - teaching health care and consumer health education

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- professional requirements for a formal Respiratory Care program or a related field beyond those that were completed for the issuance of the original license
  - that which a respiratory therapist documents as improving his job competency which is not specified on the above list and is determined to be appropriate by the Board.
- (b) The following activities shall not qualify as appropriate continuing education under 261 CMR 5.00:
  - Employee orientation subject matter
  - standard operating procedures in-service
  - orientation/in-service for equipment or procedures which become part of the regular duties of the licensee
  - certification and/or re-certification in Basic Cardiac Life Support (CPR)
- (4) Description. Subject matter shall be described in outline form and shall include learner objectives, content, time allotment, teaching methods, faculty, and evaluation format.
- (5) Types of Activities/Programs.
  - (a) Academic Course. An academic course is an activity that is approved and presented by an accredited post-secondary educational institution which carries academic credit. The course may be within the framework of a curriculum that leads to an academic degree in respiratory care beyond that required for the original license, or relevant to respiratory care, or any course that is necessary to a respiratory therapist's professional growth and development.
  - (b) Correspondence Course. A correspondence course is an activity which
    1. is developed by a professional group, such as an educational corporation or professional association; and
    2. follows a logical sequence; and
    3. involves the learner by requiring active response to module materials and provides feedback; and
    4. contains a test to indicate progress and to verify completion of module; and
    5. supplies a bibliography for continued study; and
    6. does not provide convenient opportunity for the learner to speak directly with the faculty during the activity/program.
  - (c) Recredentialing Examination. A recredentialing examination is a national credentialing examination in Respiratory care developed and offered by the NBRC, which is available to credentialed respiratory care practitioners for recredentialing.
  - (d) Planned and Supervised Clinical Experience. Planned and supervised clinical experience is an offering which is:
    1. beyond the basic level of preparation of the individual who is licensed; and
    2. based on a planned program of study; and
    3. instructed and supervised by individual(s) who possess the appropriate credentials related to the discipline being taught; and
    4. conducted in a clinical setting.
  - (e) Seminar/Workshop. A seminar/workshop is an activity which is acceptable continuing education which does not fit into one of the above listed types of activities/programs.
- (6) Education Methods.
  - (a) Learning experiences and teaching methods should be appropriate to achieve the objectives of the activity/program.
  - (b) Principles of adult education should be used in the design of the activity/program.
  - (c) Time allotted for each activity should be sufficient for the learner to meet the objectives of the activity.
  - (d) Facilities and educational resources should be adequate to implement the activities/programs.
- (7) Faculty Qualifications.
  - (a) The faculty should present documentation to the provider illustrating competency in the content of the planned learning experience and should possess knowledge of the principles of adult education.

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- (b) If the activity includes clinical experience, a respiratory therapist licensed by the Board shall provide supervision.
- (c) If the activity includes clinical experience other than respiratory care, a qualified instructor possessing the appropriate credentials of the discipline shall provide instruction.

(8) Evaluation.

- (a) Provision must be made for evaluating each learner's attainment of the stated objectives/outcomes. That attainment must be documented through an evaluation instrument or an examination instrument completed by the learner on site. The instrument shall contain at least one evaluation/examination item for each presentation.
- (b) Learners must be given the opportunity to evaluate at least the faculty, learning experiences, instructional methods, facilities and educational resources used for the activity/program.
- (c) At least one of the instruments specified in 261 CMR 5.04(8)(a) shall include the identification of the learner by his name and/or Massachusetts Respiratory Care license number, and shall be the instrument which provides the basis for awarding the contact hours to the learner. Contact hours shall only be awarded for the presentation(s) evaluated by the learner or for the presentations where the learner has correctly answered the examination item(s), whichever is applicable.

5.05: Responsibilities of the Provider

A provider shall:

- (1) Meet all requirements of 261 CMR 5.00 for each activity/program.
- (2) Maintain and furnish records as described below:
  - (a) Records of activities/programs shall be kept by the provider for a period of at least five years from the date of the activity/program.
  - (b) Records shall include:
    - a description of subject matter, as specified in 261 CMR 5.04(4); and
    - documentation of faculty qualifications; and
    - a roster of the names and Massachusetts Respiratory Care license number of the learners; and
    - evaluation or examination instrument which served as the basis for awarding the contact hours as described in 261 CMR 5.04(8).
  - (c) Within 30 days from the date of the activity/program, the provider shall furnish an authenticated record of attendance to each learner who requests said record by the end of the activity/program. The authenticated record of attendance shall specify:
    - name, Massachusetts Respiratory Care license number of the learner; and
    - the name and address of the provider; and
    - location, title, date, statement of successful completion of the activity/program; and
    - number of contact hours awarded. The contact hours awarded shall be determined by the completed instrument bearing the identification of the learner and shall be awarded as specified in 261 CMR 5.04(8)(c); and be signed by an authorizing individual; and
    - name and signature of an authorizing individual.
- (3) Provide to the Board, if requested, copies of any or all records, as delineated in 261 CMR 5.05(2), for a specified activity/program, within 14 days of the request of the Board. Those records may be used by the Board to determine compliance of the activity/program with the provisions of 261 CMR 5.00.

5.06: Reciprocity

Continuing education contact hours awarded for activities/programs approved by the AARC or the MSRC are appropriate for fulfilling the continuing education requirements pursuant to 261 CMR 5.00. Notwithstanding the provisions of 261 CMR 5.05(2)(c), a CRCE transcript issued by the AARC shall satisfy the requirements of an authenticated record of attendance.

5.07: Responsibilities of Licensees

Except as provided in 261 CMR 5.02, licensees shall:

- (1) apply for license renewal on such form as provided by the Board certifying compliance with the continuing education requirements and signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.
- (2) maintain the authenticated record of attendance for each continuing education activity/program for two consecutive full licensure periods.
- (3) within the time period requested by the Board, submit a notarized copy of the authenticated record(s) of attendance, as described in 261 CMR 5.05(2)(c), for the required number of continuing education contact hours.

5.08: Review/Approval of Continuing Education Contact Hours

- (1) The Board may review the documentation of any licensee's continuing education.
- (2) The Board shall determine whether the activity/program documentation submitted meets all criteria for continuing education as specified in 261 CMR 5.00.
- (3) Any continuing education not meeting all provisions of 261 CMR 5.00 may be rejected in part or in whole by the Board.
- (4) Any incomplete or inaccurate documentation of continuing education may be rejected in part or in whole by the Board.

5.09: Decisions by the Board

The Board shall determine the requirements that must be fulfilled in order for a licensee who has not met the continuing education requirement to renew his license. The determination may include:

- (1) requiring the licensee to meet any or all of the provisions of M.G.L. c. 112, § 23S subsection (2); and/or
- (2) designating a period of time for the licensee to acquire the number of continuing education contact hours specified by the Board; and/or
- (3) waiving the requirement for a number of continuing education contact hours specified by the Board; and/or
- (4) allowing the licensee to continue to practice for a period of time specified by the Board.

5.10: Appeal Process

A licensee may appeal the decision of the Board not to accept submitted continuing education contact hours by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board within 30 days of the licensee's receipt of notification from the Board of the non-qualifying continuing education experiences. The licensee may provide appropriate information to the Board in connection with the appeal. The Board shall review all appeals and may request a licensee to appear before the Board in its review of the appeal. The Board may allow the licensee to continue practicing pending the outcome of the appeal.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

261 CMR 5.00: M.G.L. c. 112, §§ 23R through 23BB; c. 13, § 11B.

NON-TEXT PAGE